

Berkeley panel rejects Israel divestment resolution

Community action commission votes down proposal to divest from companies working with Israel

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A Berkeley, California, commission rejected a resolution to divest from companies that do business with Israel.

The Berkeley City Human Welfare and Community Action Commission voted 5-2 against the [resolution](#), with one abstention, on Wednesday night.

City Attorney Zach Cowan said the issue was not within the purview of the commission, which generally addresses issues of local poverty, the San Jose Mercury News [reported](#).

In September, Berkeley City Councilman Darryl Moore removed commissioner Cheryl Davila, who he appointed, from her position over the divestment proposal. Davila was removed just before the panel took up the issue at its Sept. 16 meeting.

Moore reportedly said he asked his commissioners to discuss with him any controversial issues they were working on. Davila worked on the resolution for nearly a year without discussing it with Moore, the Mercury News said.

Yitzhak Santis, the chief programs officer at NGO Monitor, a Jerusalem-based research institute that monitored the resolution's progress, called the defeat "a major failure for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign and a testament to the herculean efforts of Israel's friends in the Bay Area."

Johanna Wilder of StandWithUs, a pro-Israel group, spoke at the commission meeting.

"BDS activists attempted to hijack the commission to further their narrow, political, extremist agenda, but the commissioners refused to succumb to this pressure and defeated the resolution," said Wilder, associate director of the group's Northern California region.

Organizations that appeared at the meeting in support of the resolution included Jewish Voice for Peace, the American Friends Service Committee and the Middle East Children's Alliance.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco was among the organizations that mobilized against the resolution.



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